



THIS WEEK IN IRAQ

The Official Newsletter of the Multi-National Force - Iraq

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Tuesday, Sept. 23, 2008

New Police Stations Opening

TIKRIT — Iraqi security in the Salah ad Din province got a shot in the arm Sept. 16, as the first in a series of local police stations here opened its doors to join the fight to secure Iraq's streets.

Dozens gathered in the midst of a dust storm, as an Iraqi police station validation ceremony marked the opening of the al Answar Police Station in the town of al Secour, which is part of the Tikrit Police District.

The Answar station is the first in a flurry of police stations set to open in the expansive northern province in the next several months. Thirteen more stations in the province are scheduled to be validated by Coalition forces, said Capt. James Bloom, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division provost marshal.

A station that meets the validation criteria means they no longer require Coalition support in the areas of training, logistics and basic police skills, said Bloom.

The Answar station rated high marks from its police transition team mentors, who assessed the station's readiness on a

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An Iraqi Policeman keeps an eye out during a police station grand opening in al Secour, Iraq, Sept. 16, 2008. This is the first in a flurry of police stations set to open here in the next several months. Photo by Sgt. Richard Rzepka, 1st Brigade Combat Team.

This Week in News ...

Solar Lights Shine in North Baghdad



GoI Boosts Quality of Life in Baghdad



Funds Continue to Flow Toward Reconstruction

CAMP VICTORY — When Gen. David Petraeus outlined his counterinsurgency strategy in 2006, he said money should be used as ammunition.

Violence in Iraq is constantly decreasing, which allows commanders on the ground to use that ammunition with greater effect. They are funding projects ranging from infrastructure to small-business development with the commander's emergency response program (CERP).

In areas ravaged by years of insurgent violence, CERP-funded projects have rebuilt schools, hospitals and essential infrastructure, as well as stimulated Iraq's

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Medical Update: Dr. al-Hasnawi and Dr. al-Sheikhly

Reconstruction Report: The Latest from USACE.

AFN's Iraqi Freedom Minute: Visit the Video Archives



An Iraqi Army Soldier and a 'Sons of Iraq' citizen volunteer group member stand watch side by side in the Taji Qada, northwest of Baghdad, March 2, 2008. The GoI will begin paying Sol members Oct. 1, 2008. Photo by 2nd Stryker Brigade, 25th Infantry Division.

GoI Will Now Pay 'Sons of Iraq'

CAMP TAJI — The government of Iraq (GoI) has pledged millions of dollars to begin paying the 'Sons of Iraq' (SoI), the highly-successful, volunteer groups of citizens who have been instrumental in decreasing violence throughout the country.

Beginning, Oct. 1, 2008, American taxpayers will no longer pay to support the SoI program.

The United States currently pays SoI members \$300 a month. By the end of November, the Iraqi Army will pay SoI members in Iraqi Dinar, said Maj. J.D. Highfill, deputy team leader with embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team Baghdad – 5, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team "Warrior," 25th Infantry Division.

Approximately 13,000 SoI members man checkpoints and keep watch in the 1,300 square miles of 2nd SBCT's operational area. This means in that area alone, approximately \$4 million per month will

now come from GoI funds instead of U.S. funds.

"When this happens across the country, this will mean a lot of money that stays in taxpayer pockets," said Maj. Gus Waterhouse, a native of Ewa Beach, Hawaii, and civil affairs officer in charge, 2nd SBCT.

But as may be the case with most transitions, there are potential growing pains involved.

"This is not about the money," Highfill said, adding the GoI has the resources to adequately and continually pay the SoI members. Highfill said he's more concerned with the massive administrative challenges the transition presents.

The U.S. Army's method of tracking SoI membership and activities is new to the Iraqi Army (IA). If not turned over properly and executed properly, it could jeopardize the efficiency of the pay process.

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Citizens on Patrol: Hundreds Graduate Police Course, Stand Ready

DIYALA — Jubilant Iraqi Police graduates jumped with joy as they graduated from the Ashraf training center here, Sept. 17. There were 704 graduates, including 21 females who were the first women to graduate from the Ashraf facility and join the Iraqi Police.

"They were incredibly happy, jumping and singing about Diyala," said Scott Johnson of AFN, who helped cover the ceremony.

"This is one of the happiest days of my life. I have always dreamed of becoming an Iraqi Policeman," said Ali, one of the graduates.

Iraqi Police Maj. Gen. Abdul, acting provincial director of police in Diyala, congratulated the graduates for their commitment to Iraq and for stepping forward to serve their country. He said the Iraqi security forces are ready to receive the security for Diyala province from the Multi-National Force - Iraq.

The Ashraf training center was opened earlier this year to quickly train more police in Diyala to aid in improving security there.

The first class graduated May 15.

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Moments in Time: Still Images from the Military's Best Photographers



A local girl steps out as Iraqi Police pass out food and water, Sept. 16, 2008. Photo by PO2 Joan Kretschmer.



Joint flight crews perform inspections on an MI-17 helicopter, Al-Taji Air Base, Sept. 11, 2008. Photo by SSgt. Paul Villanueva.



A child jumps in the newly restored swimming pool in Risalah, Sept. 18, 2008. Photo by PO2 Joan Kretschmer.